

CRC Handbook of Nutritional Supplements

Volume I Human Use

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AQUATIC VASCULAR PLANT FOODS

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INTRODUCTION

Research efforts on the nutritional quality of vascular aquatic plants under controlled environmental conditions has been very limited to date. Most of the data in this area have been determined on plants that were collected from natural lakes and ponds. The climate and nutrient content of these aquatic systems were highly variable. In general, the nutritional quality of the plants is a reflection of the conditions under which they were grown. Current research on utilizing vascular aquatic plants to remove nutrients from domestic sewage lagoons has revealed that the crude protein, phosphorus, and other essential elements content of the plants can be improved and consistently maintained at a high level.

In the data following, the nutritional quality of some common vascular aquatic plants has been compiled. A small part on the nutritional value of leaf protein extracts has also been included. All of the information was collected on plants grown on lakes and ponds, unless otherwise noted.

Crude protein was calculated as Kjeldahl nitrogen \times 6.25. Carbohydrate was calculated as the difference between 100% and the sum of the percentages of protein, fat, and ash.

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NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION OF VASCULAR AQUATIC MACROPHYTES

Table 1
PROXIMATE COMPOSITION

Species	Dry weight (%)						Caloric content (kcal/g)	Ref.
	Water	Crude protein	Fat	Ash	Carbohydrates	Crude fiber		
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	85.5	15.6	2.68	13.9	67.82	—	21.3	1.2
—	19.0	—	18.39	—	—	—	—	—
—	17.94	—	14.72	—	—	—	—	—
—	53.56	—	7.21	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Aphanizomenon flos-aquae</i>	89.6	12.5	4.71	8.8	73.99	—	23.7	11.8
<i>Braenia schreberi</i>	93.0	13.1	5.42	9.6	71.88	—	26.8	15.6
<i>Cabomba caroliniana</i>	94.8	21.7	5.97	20.6	51.73	—	27.9	1.9
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	—	15.38	—	43.41	—	—	—	—
<i>Chara sp.</i>	94.0	22.85	2.12	17.75	57.28	18.3	—	—
—	16.31	—	—	15.93	—	—	—	—
—	91.1	9.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	16.50	—	18.11	—	—	—	—
—	—	14.94	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>E. crassipes</i> (leaves)	84.2	10.7	2.7	14.7	71.9	17.0	—	—
<i>E. crassipes</i> (leaves)*	—	32.88	2.30	11.75	53.07	13.7	—	—
<i>E. crassipes</i> (stalts)*	—	18.88	1.79	17.85	61.48	22.4	—	—
<i>E. crassipes</i> (roots)*	—	22.94	1.39	19.15	56.52	17.8	—	—
<i>Eleocharis acicularis</i>	88.9	12.5	3.59	9.9	74.01	—	27.9	2.0
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	—	26.81	—	21.87	—	—	—	—
<i>Elodea densa</i>	90.2	20.5	3.27	22.1	54.13	—	29.2	0.8
<i>Hydrilla</i> sp.	92.0	18.0	3.80	28.0	50.20	—	32.0	—
<i>Hydrochloa carolinensis</i>	80.6	10.4	2.78	6.1	80.72	—	22.0	0.8
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	95.8	22.4	2.19	17.4	46.21	11.8	—	—
<i>Hydrodictyon reticulatum</i>	—	24.19	—	17.94	—	—	—	—
<i>Hydrocolea quadrivalvis</i>	89.0	11.1	3.85	9.3	73.73	—	22.8	2.9
<i>Hydrotrida carolinina</i>	93.6	9.7	3.85	22.7	63.75	—	29.5	2.3

<i>Jussiaea decurrentis</i>	19.1	11.7	65.27	2
<i>J. diffusa</i>	86.9	10.7	3.76	2
<i>J. peruviana</i>	81.5	9.4	7.10	2
<i>J. americana</i>	85.0	22.9	3.40	2
<i>Lemna minor</i>	—	12.63	—	8
<i>Lemna minor</i>	—	15.94	—	3
<i>Lemna sp.</i>	90.0	17.0	3.0	12
<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i>	—	50.50	—	3
<i>Mougeotia sp.</i>	—	11.06	—	3
<i>Myriophyllum brasiliense</i>	86.3	14.1	3.78	2
<i>M. heterophyllum</i>	90.0	8.5	2.67	2
<i>M. spicatum</i>	87.2	9.8	1.81	2
<i>Najas flexilis</i>	—	11.63	—	3
<i>N. guadalupensis</i>	92.7	22.8	3.75	2
<i>Netrium lutes</i>	83.2	13.7	5.25	2
<i>Nuphar advena</i>	88.0	20.6	6.25	2
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	86.3	16.6	5.38	2
<i>Nymphaoides aquatum</i>	89.7	9.3	3.29	2
<i>Oronium aquaticum</i>	86.8	19.8	7.83	2
<i>Paspalum floridanum</i>	—	11.94	—	3
<i>Phragmites communis</i>	—	11.44	—	3
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	94.1	16.50	3.75	2
<i>Pithophora sp.</i>	—	16.06	—	3
<i>Polygonum hydropiperoides</i>	80.8	11.9	2.39	2
<i>P. pensylvanicum</i>	76.1	10.3	2.77	2
<i>P. sensitatum</i>	85.0	11.0	2.99	2
<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>	88.2	10.9	2.85	2
<i>P. diversifolius</i>	90.2	17.3	2.87	2
<i>P. illinoensis</i>	—	21.44	—	3
<i>P. nodosus</i>	84.2	11.2	3.62	2
<i>Rhizoclonium sp.</i>	—	19.75	—	3
<i>Ricciocarpus natans</i>	91.0	10.6	1.1	2
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	85.0	17.1	6.71	2
<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	78.1	12.1	6.85	2
<i>Sparganium americanum</i>	89.1	23.7	8.11	2
<i>Spinodelia oligorrhiza</i>	87.1	28.5	5.5	2
<i>S. oligorrhiza</i>	91.1	37.7	4.7	2
<i>S. oligorrhiza</i>	—	31.7	5.2	15

NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION OF VASCULAR AQUATIC MACROPHYTES

Table I (continued)
PROXIMATE COMPOSITION

Species	Dry weight (%)						Caloric content (kcal/2)	Ref.
	Water	Crude protein	Fat	Ash	Carbohydrates	Crude fiber		
<i>S. polyrhiza</i> ^a	—	39.53	3.40	12.5	44.57	15.6	—	—
<i>S. polyrhiza</i> ^b	—	24.88	3.05	12.0	60.07	11.8	—	16
<i>Spirogyra</i> sp.	—	16.88	—	13.33	—	—	—	16
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	77.1	10.3	3.91	6.9	78.89	—	39.2	3
	—	9.94	—	9.70	—	—	2.1	3.69
<i>Wolffia arrhiza</i>	96.0	19.8	3.0	18.3	56.90	13.3	—	2
<i>Wolffia</i> sp.	—	21.5	5.5	14.5	58.50	10.6	—	3

^aAverage of the analyses of plants collected from two, heavily loaded, domestic sewage lagoons.

^bAverage.

Grown in treated waste water effluent.

Average of plant samples collected from anaerobic twin waste lagoon.

Plants collected from one, heavily loaded, domestic sewage lagoon.

Plants collected from natural aquatic system with low nutrient content.

Table 2
MINERAL COMPOSITION

Species	Dry weight basis											Ref.
	P (%)	K (%)	Na (%)	Ca (%)	S (%)	Mg (%)	Fe (ppm)	Mo (ppm)	Zn (ppm)	Cu (ppm)	B (ppm)	
<i>Ahermanthera philoxeroides</i>	0.17	4.56	0.37	1.43	0.14	0.31	720	440	—	—	—	3
	0.32	5.20	0.37	0.52	0.29	0.52	720	440	90	15	—	8
<i>Aphanizomenon flos-aquae</i>	1.17	0.64	0.19	0.73	1.18	0.21	833	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Brasenia schreberi</i>	0.14	0.99	0.66	1.79	0.11	0.26	500	265	267	32	—	7
<i>Cabomba caroliniana</i>	—	—	—	—	0.10	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Ceratophyllum demersum</i>	0.26	4.01	1.16	0.77	0.18	0.42	1,053	486	100	30	—	7
	—	—	—	—	0.30	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>Chara sp.</i>	0.25	2.35	0.13	9.03	0.55	0.92	2,520	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	0.87	3.12	1.75	0.65	0.49	0.26	1,920	189	37	26	—	16
	0.17	4.16	0.10	1.99	—	0.40	250	—	—	—	—	3
	0.43	4.25	0.34	1.00	0.33	1.05	250	3,940	50	11	—	8
	0.54	4.45	0.41	1.35	0.48	0.56	3,420	270	67	15	20	9
<i>E. crassipes</i>	0.91	3.60	1.83	0.53	0.45	0.85	143	69	21	11	—	16
<i>E. crassipes</i>	0.95	3.02	0.94	0.64	0.34	0.21	130	132	24	22	—	16
<i>E. crassipes</i>	0.56	2.92	1.79	0.61	1.62	0.23	5,790	199	70	63	—	16
<i>Eleocharis acicularis</i>	0.24	2.86	0.54	0.53	0.18	0.33	2,920	192	68	42	—	3
	—	—	—	—	0.28	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>Eleocharis quadrangulata</i>	0.10	1.81	0.12	0.20	0.15	0.10	560	120	45	20	—	7
<i>Elodea canadensis</i>	0.57	3.65	0.90	2.80	0.27	0.65	1,320	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Hydrilla sp.</i>	0.28	2.80	—	4.30	0.40	0.90	—	—	—	—	—	5
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	0.42	3.33	1.34	0.77	0.31	0.21	7,490	357	59	12	—	16
<i>Hydrodictyon reticulatum</i>	0.23	4.21	0.38	0.69	1.41	0.17	1,313	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	0.27	0.89	0.40	0.38	0.26	0.11	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>Justicia americana</i>	0.12	3.28	0.17	0.90	0.18	0.41	1,085	112	265	26	—	8
	—	—	—	—	0.13	—	—	—	—	—	12.1	3
<i>Lemna minor</i>	0.63	5.20	0.30	0.70	0.30	0.51	1,690	750	—	—	—	3
<i>Lemna sp.</i>	0.64	2.03	—	1.34	—	0.30	6,500	1,500	364	14	—	12
<i>Microcystis aeruginosa</i>	0.68	0.79	0.04	0.53	0.27	0.17	382	68	—	—	—	3
<i>Mougeotia sp.</i>	0.25	1.20	0.49	1.68	0.36	0.57	1,080	2,300	—	—	—	3
<i>Myriophyllum brasiliense</i>	—	—	—	—	0.14	—	—	—	—	—	23.5	3
<i>M. heterophyllum</i>	0.16	1.25	1.87	1.47	0.24	0.26	2,000	473	54	44	—	7
<i>M. spicatum</i>	0.42	1.87	0.75	2.77	0.43	0.74	660	5,130	30	—	—	3
<i>Najas flexilis</i>	0.30	1.82	0.78	6.11	0.48	0.97	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>N. guadalupensis</i>	0.15	3.49	0.61	0.98	0.28	0.47	712	201	48	48	—	7
<i>Nelumbo lutea</i>	0.19	2.27	0.28	1.56	0.16	0.23	126	607	50	40	—	7
<i>Nuphar advena</i>	0.40	1.88	1.47	1.08	0.32	0.27	740	300	50	35	—	7
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	0.18	1.28	1.35	1.06	0.14	0.14	600	128	32	36	—	7
<i>Panicum hemitonium</i>	0.14	1.06	0.19	0.38	0.23	0.25	133	292	31	26	—	7
<i>Paspalum fluitans</i>	0.10	2.54	0.22	0.26	0.35	0.22	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Phragmites communis</i>	0.10	0.52	0.26	0.43	—	0.27	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	0.30	2.9	—	4.40	0.39	0.90	—	—	—	—	—	5
<i>Pithophora sp.</i>	0.30	3.06	0.07	3.82	1.42	0.20	2,836	929	—	—	—	3
<i>Pontederia cordata</i>	0.24	2.58	0.83	0.96	0.22	0.15	200	970	67	60	—	7
<i>Pontamogeton diversifolius</i>	0.27	3.04	0.44	1.14	0.50	0.19	1,240	160	60	36	—	7
<i>Potamogeton illinoensis</i>	0.12	2.66	0.19	2.76	0.20	0.84	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Rhizoclonium sp.</i>	0.34	2.37	0.06	0.60	0.27	0.19	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Ricciocarpus natans</i>	0.20	1.8	—	0.79	—	0.28	26,800	9,500	82	19	—	12
<i>Scirpus americanus</i>	0.27	0.89	0.40	0.38	0.26	0.11	—	—	—	—	—	7
<i>Spirodela oligorrhiza*</i>	1.0	1.57	—	1.3	—	0.29	3,400	700	420	34	—	12
<i>Spirodela oligorrhiza*</i>	1.71	1.82	—	0.73	—	0.25	4,700	1,500	119	13	—	12
<i>Spirodela polyrhiza*</i>	1.01	2.13	0.74	0.88	0.85	—	—	—	—	—	—	16
<i>Spirodela polyrhiza*</i>	0.36	1.22	5.54	1.34	0.45	—	—	—	—	—	—	16

Table 2 (continued)
MINERAL COMPOSITION

Species	Dry weight basis												Ref.
	P (%)	K (%)	Na (%)	Ca (%)	S (%)	Mg (%)	Fe (ppm)	Mn (ppm)	Zn (ppm)	Cu (ppm)	B (ppm)		
<i>Spirogyra</i> sp.	0.21	0.95	1.42	0.70	0.25	0.38	1,552	—	—	—	—	—	3
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	0.21	2.38	0.38	0.89	0.13	0.16	120	412	30	37	—	—	8
<i>Utricularia inflata</i>	0.12	1.98	1.52	0.67	0.26	0.21	2,112	480	108	47	—	—	7
<i>Wolffia</i> sp.	0.97	3.76	—	0.77	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	12

- Average of the analyses of plants collected from two, heavily loaded, domestic sewage lagoons.
- Grown in treated waste water effluent.
- Average of plant samples collected from anaerobic swine waste lagoon.
- Plants collected from natural aquatic system with low nutrient content.

Table 3
AMINO ACID PROFILE

Essential Amino Acids

Species	Crude protein	Actual protein*	Dry weight basis (g/100 g protein)									Ref.
			Ile	Leu	Lys	Met	Phe	Thr	Trp	Val		
FAO reference pattern	—	—	4.2	4.8	4.2	2.2	2.8	2.8	1.4	4.2	—	10
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> †	25.94	19.45	5.51	9.06	6.25	1.83	5.46	4.99	—	6.00	—	5
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	4.7	—	5.6	8.7	7.6	2.3	5.2	5.0	—	11.4	—	13
<i>E. crassipes</i> (leaves)‡	31.3	29.81	4.89	8.68	5.96	1.47	5.70	4.56	1.04	5.83	—	17
<i>E. crassipes</i> (stalks)‡	18.9	16.13	3.35	5.27	3.35	0.87	3.66	3.35	1.04	3.60	—	16
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	22.40	20.10	4.93	8.02	7.22	0.95	5.28	4.76	1.43	5.93	—	16
<i>Justicia americana</i> §	17.69	10.76	4.83	8.08	5.95	1.30	5.11	4.92	—	5.57	—	4
<i>J. americana</i> ¶	10.19	5.93	4.55	7.42	5.90	1.69	4.89	5.40	—	5.90	—	4
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	23.03	17.63	5.21	9.21	6.93	1.74	5.79	5.03	—	6.31	—	5
<i>Spirodela polyrhiza</i> **	39.53	27.79	4.64	8.89	6.44	2.16	5.69	4.61	2.10	5.83	—	16
<i>S. polyrhiza</i> **	24.84	17.74	4.51	8.35	5.53	1.86	5.13	4.46	2.36	5.47	—	16
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	8.00	—	5.0	9.2	4.6	1.5	5.6	5.3	—	6.2	—	6
Species	Ala	Asp	Arg	Cys	Glu	Gly	His	Pro	Ser	Tyr	Ref.	
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i> †	6.95	14.05	6.08	0.29	12.48	6.00	2.16	4.76	4.71	3.91	—	5
<i>E. crassipes</i>	7.1	10.2	5.2	0.7	9.8	6.4	2.3	4.8	4.8	3.4	—	13
	5.59	17.37	2.98	11.60	9.29	5.14	1.90	4.73	4.32	2.98	—	14
<i>E. crassipes</i> , (leaves)‡	6.50	5.49	12.63	1.37	11.56	5.39	2.31	6.30	4.29	3.55	—	17
<i>E. crassipes</i> , (stalks)‡	4.15	3.10	35.40	0.76	11.97	3.66	1.43	3.84	3.10	2.29	—	16
<i>Hydrocotyle umbonata</i>	5.88	12.40	5.18	1.54	17.28	5.18	2.34	4.43	4.58	2.74	—	16
<i>Justicia americana</i> §	6.13	16.44	5.76	0.04	14.03	5.95	2.69	4.74	5.02	3.44	—	4
<i>J. americana</i> ¶	5.90	15.34	6.07	0.17	12.96	5.90	2.87	5.40	5.90	4.05	—	4
<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	7.06	11.86	4.60	0.37	13.40	6.21	2.19	4.95	5.03	4.17	—	5
<i>Spirodela polyrhiza</i> **	6.88	9.68	7.99	1.66	12.67	5.94	2.05	4.61	4.68	3.53	—	16
<i>S. polyrhiza</i> **	7.24	14.72	6.82	1.30	13.14	5.58	1.69	4.57	4.68	2.59	—	16
<i>Typha latifolia</i>	6.2	14.5	5.0	0.1	15.4	5.8	2.0	5.2	5.1	3.3	—	6

- Sum of amino acids.
- Tryptophan analysis not obtained — where tryptophan omitted, author assumed tryptophan to not be present in large quantities and, therefore, the calculated compositional percentages to be reasonably accurate with this omission.
- Not analyzed.
- Plants grown in domestic sewage.
- Maximum protein.
- Minimum protein.
- Predominant species (small amounts of *Lemna* sp.).
- Plants gathered from aquatic system with low nutrient content.

Table 4
VITAMINS

Species	Dry weight basis (constituents/100 g)								Ref.	
	Thiamine HCl (B1) (mg)	Riboflavin (B2) (mg)	B ₆ (μg)	Niacin bound (mg)	C (IU)	A (IU)	Pantothenic acid (mg)	Pyridoxine HCl (B6) (mg)		
U.S. RDA	1.5	1.7	6.0	20.0	60	5,000	10.0	2.0	30	11
<i>Eichornia crassipes</i>										
Whole plant*	—	—	23.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Leaves*	0.591	1.07	1.26	7.94	—	711	5.56	1.52	30	17
Stems*	—	—	1.49	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Roots*	—	—	68.2	—	—	—	—	—	—	17
Leaf protein extract	0.477	0.842	—	0.28	1.10	—	0.101	0.0613	14	16
<i>Hydrocotyle ranunculoides</i>	0.563	2.32	23.0	10.4	52.3	22,500	1.64	—	32.8	16
<i>Spirula polyrrhiza</i> **	1.38	—	13.0	49.0	—	—	—	—	—	16
<i>S. polyrrhiza</i> **	0.664	1.88	26.0	0.687	27.8	31,700	0.892	0.876	16	16

* Plants grown in domestic sewage.

** Predominant species, small amounts of *Lemna* sp. present.

*** Plants collected from natural aquatic system with low nutrient content.

NUTRITIONAL COMPOSITION OF LEAF PROTEIN EXTRACT

Table 5
PROXIMATE COMPOSITION OF LEAF PROTEIN EXTRACT

Species	Dry weight basis (%)						Caloric content (kcal/g)	Ref.
	Crude protein	Fat	Ash	Total carbohydrate	Cellulose			
<i>Alternanthera philoxeroides</i>	31.4	7.68	12.47	48.5	5.9	4.58	2	
<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	57.8	3.94	4.77	33.5	—	—	16	
<i>Justicia americana</i>	45.73	9.37	8.19	36.7	1.6	5.22	2	
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	40.0	8.57	4.24	47.2	8.3	4.94	2	
<i>Orontium aquaticum</i>	49.	14.88	7.38	28.1	2.6	5.59	2	
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	42.8	16.62	4.23	36.4	—	5.42	2	

Table 6
AMINO ACID PROFILE OF LEAF PROTEIN EXTRACT

Species	Crude protein	Dry weight (%)																		Ref.
		Ala	Asp	Arg	Cys	Glu	Gly	His	Ile	Leu	Lys	Met	Phe	Pro	Ser	Thr	Trp	Tyr	Val	
<i>Aleuranthera philoxeroides</i>	31.4	—	—	1.12	—	—	—	0.63	—	0.94	1.61	0.20	Tr*	—	—	0.95	—	—	1.37	2
<i>Eichornia crassipes</i>	57.8	3.64	5.21	3.86	0.70	6.80	3.23	1.33	2.40	5.15	3.81	1.15	3.42	2.96	2.58	2.79	0.84	2.61	3.27	16
<i>Justicia americana</i>	45.7	—	—	2.99	—	—	—	1.07	2.45	4.29	2.80	0.89	2.78	—	—	2.27	—	2.87	2	
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	40.0	—	—	2.81	—	—	—	1.07	1.97	3.82	3.73	0.71	2.24	—	—	1.91	—	—	2.62	2
<i>Oronthium aquaticum</i>	49.6	—	—	3.17	—	—	—	1.02	2.32	4.30	2.64	0.84	2.80	—	—	2.26	—	—	2.53	2
<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>	42.8	—	—	2.14	—	—	—	1.14	1.46	1.87	1.52	0.56	Tr	—	—	1.57	—	—	1.80	2

* Tr = trace.

• Mean.

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